Letters to the Editor

To Whose Credit?

I question the article defending the present school system, written by Miss A. V. Turner (supervisor, test and measurements).

I ask her to make known the number, out of the 209 pupils quoted as an example, who have completed, or are about to complete, Grades 1, 2 and 3 in two years, who have received schooling prior to entering public school.

Let us then see where the credit on the whole must go: to the school system and the ability of teachers to separate the sheep from the goats, or to a previous exposure of the child to the three Rs.

We will then have a more accurate estimate of the glories of our present elementary school system.

SHEILA M. TAYLOR.

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Enviable Malays

A few weeks ago an article from Reuters correspondent about the Malays being indolent and pleasure-loving, was printed in your paper. I have lived among them for 24 years. In this world of hectic rush and hurry, we could learn a good deal from the Malays.

They are a gentle, quiet and industrious people. They have a philosophical outlook on life, and lap up knowledge like a piece of blotting paper. It behooves one to give them the right and true knowledge, or it hits back like a boomerang.

They are nature's gentlemen—never hurry themselves or anybody else; always polite and full of fun and jokes. Money slips through their fingers; they are very happy-go-lucky, but have not had a fair chance in life. Their make-up is to be envied.

If a patch of land, to grow chickens, vegetables, fruit and cocoanuts with a little rubber, enough to market, could make the world's people happy, how different life would be. And if a bicycle, a few cigarets and a bit of machinery to tinker with (they are very good mechanics) could satisfy the rest of the world as they do the Malay, how much less tension we would have in this world.

They have taught me a good deal in my life among them. Indians, Chinese and Singalese I have lived among and studied, but give me a Malay for his happy smile and gentle disposition, and his outlook on life.

(MRS.) DOROTHY M. FISH.

630 Setchel Avenue,
R.R. 1, Sidney.

Admit Tubercular Europeans B.C. Tory Suggests

OTTAWA (CP) — Support came from both sides of the Commons Thursday for a suggestion of Stuart Fleming (PC, Okanagan-Revelstoke) that the government make an important departure from current immigration policy by admitting Europeans now barred through illness and providing them with medical care.

He proposed that Canada "institute on a trial basis—and I would suggest in the first instance on a trial basis only—a program designed to provide for the difficult cases and in particular those who are suffering from tuberculosis."

Replying to Mr. Fleming's proposal Immigration Minister "The matter of bringing people in to go to hospital must be cleared with the provincial authorities. Just how far we can go along that road remains to be seen."

Of 38,000 Hungarian refugees brought to Canada, 900 had to enter Canadian hospitals. This was an indication that Canada had done something.

H. W. Herridge (CCF, Kootenay West) said it is "time to halt the enthusiasm" with regard to helping Hungarian refugees of the 1956 revolt and turn to Canada's unemployment problem.

OLD PREJUDICE

On the question of cutting down immigration, the Italian-born Liberal member Hubert Badanai said the idea that immigrants take jobs from Canadians is "an old prejudice that is absolutely unjustified."

Meanwhile, CCFer Harold Winch of Vancouver charged Canada has been held up to stigma and ridicule as maintaining a color bar in immigration even against fellow members of the Commonwealth.

He urged Immigration Minister Fairclough to announce that at least serious consideration is being given to "greater honesty" in granting landing permits for citizens of Commonwealth countries irrespective of their color.

He mentioned particularly Jamaica.

China Eyes Islands

TOKYO (AP) — Communist China has started some tough talk about another group of "off-shore islands."

These are known as the Paracels. The strategic archipelago is located in the South China Sea and is claimed by the Peking regime and by South Viet Nam as well as the Nationalist Chinese government on Formosa.

They lie about midway between Red China, which calls them the Hsisha Islands, and the Vietnamese coast.

In the last few weeks they have become a source of friction between Red China and South Viet Nam and a possible danger to peace in that part of the world.

South Viet Nam has occupied many of the islands and has set up a weather station there.

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PROF. ROBERT CLARK
... year-long study

Fire Kills 'Jailed' Boys

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (UPI) —Twenty-one Negro boys died behind locked doors yesterday in a fire that consumed the dormitory of a reform school 12 miles south of Little Rock.

Forty-seven others escaped. They got out through windows from which they kicked "escape proof" screens or from which a 16-year-old trusty tore the screens from the outside.

L. R. Gaines, '48, Negro superintendent of the Arkansas Negro Boys Industrial School, said there was no attendant on duty in the dormitory because he is sick and in a Little Rock hospital.

Gov. Orval Faubus rushed to the burning school near the little town of Wrightsville. He was both angered and sickened.

"There is supposed to be a man in each building to warn the boys of any such disaster as this," he said. He ordered an immediate investigation to find out why the doors were locked if there was no night attendant on duty.

The struggling boys couldn't budge the screen on one window and a dozen died in a pile. The fire almost destroyed the bodies.

The fire broke out in the caretaker's room of the U-shaped building.

The superintendent said most of the boys in the dormitory were in for minor offences, such as hubcap stealing, or because their parents split up and there was no place for them to go.

"One of the boys we lost was sent here when he got picked up for soaping windows on Halloween, I understand," Gaines said.

UBC Professor Tells Ottawa:

Canadians Can't Afford U.S. Pension Scheme

OTTAWA (CP)—Canadians simply don't earn enough to provide the high old-age pension benefits available in the U.S., says Prof. Robert Clark after a year-long scrutiny of the American contributory program.

Weighing the merits of launching a similar scheme in Canada, the UBC professor told the government yesterday:

1. A huge pile of money would be needed to turn the existing $55-a-month federal pension plan into an employee-employer contributory scheme.

LENGTHY WAIT

2. Because average Canadian earnings are about 30 per cent below those in the U.S., Canadians for at least a decade couldn't hope to achieve the maximum U.S. benefits, which currently run to about $127 a month.

3. At least two years would be required to bring in a new scheme and, before plunging into a contributory plan, it would be "very important" for the government to consider other methods of boosting pensions. Britain's experience would be useful.

4. Presumably, under a contributory plan, the minimum monthly payment would be the present $35 pension. This would compare with the present $33 minimum in the U.S., a minimum achieved only after 22 years of contributions.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker asked a year ago that the American system be studied.

Because of lower Canadian earning power, Canadian contributory pension benefits would be lower than the American even if Canadians were prepared to have a higher proportion of their national income go into pensions, Prof. Clark said.

★ ★ ★

Our Way Best Way

OTTAWA (CP) — Serious flaws exist in proposals to set the amount of a Canadian old-age pension by other than the present means, a study of contributory pension schemes suggested yesterday.

UBC Prof. Robert Clark said the two major political parties have both followed the practice of legislating for "as high a pension as the party then believed the nation could afford."

OTHER PRINCIPLES

But pensions might also be based on two other principles:

1. A "subsistence" pension, entitling the pensioner to such amenities as a daily newspaper and a radio and later even TV, based on a statistical study of the minimum amount to support life.

2. An "automatic share" pension rising with the economy and sheltering pensioners from "the gales of inflation."

Chief faults of these systems were that the minimum level of subsistence probably is impossible to measure, and that it would be "extradordinarily difficult politically" to reduce the "share" pensions in depressions.

★ ★ ★

Residence Rule Wrong

OTTAWA (CP) — Abolition of the 10-year residence requirement for old age assistance payments is suggested in the Clark pensions report.

The report says that, since an individual's need is presumably the essential criterion for the payment, "it is difficult . . . to understand how the requirement of 10 years' residence in Canada can be defended for this program."

But the author, Prof. Robert Clark, says any change in the residence rule would require assent of both federal and provincial governments.

The report says that though criticisms can be made of details in the old age assistance program, a far more important fact is that "the program alleviates an immeasurable amount of need among the aged."

The report makes no comments about the blindness and disability allowances, except to say they make a "valuable contribution to the alleviation of need" among recipients.

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